

Members Present: Linda Davis, Chris Holmes, Rebecca Kiefer for District Attorney John Chisholm, Kim Kampschroer, Mallory O'Brien, Susan Gadacz, Colleen Ellingson, Deanna Alexander, State Senator Nikiya Harris Dodd, State Representative LaTonya Johnson, Judge Michael Dwyer for Judge Triggiano, Associate Members Maria Rodriguez and Steve Gilbertson were also in attendance.

Meeting Notice

First, the notice of the meeting was published in the Wednesday, January 28, 2015 edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Second, the notice was faxed to the newspaper of record for the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Journal, on Wednesday, January 28, 2015. Finally, the notice was emailed to the Partnership Council stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on Wednesday, January 7, 2015 and Monday, January 26, 2015. This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Announcements

Dr. Earnestine Willis has resigned from the Partnership Council.

With the advent of the resignation of Dr. Willis, current co-chairs of the Health and Education Committee are Christine Holmes and Linda Davis. A motion was made and seconded to appoint Christine Holmes as the Chair of the Health and Education Committee going forward. The motion was approved unanimously.

There are four openings for positions for citizens on the Partnership Council. Persons interested in becoming a Partnership Council member need to follow the application process on the Governor's website. Deadline for applying is March 31, 2015.

Minutes

Minutes from the November 21, 2014 meeting were approved as written.

Care4Kids, Mike Boeder

Mr. Boeder described the operation of the Care4Kids medical program for children in out-of-home care and discussed the outcomes of the program to date. A copy of the power point presentation was distributed.

BMCW Organizational Status, Secretary Anderson

Secretary Anderson discussed the plans for the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare becoming a Division. The Secretary noted that there is an internal DCF team working on the Division design. A move to Division status will promote closer relationships with other counties. The Department of Children and Families will conduct a national search to recruit a new Director. The Division Director is a political appointee.

Mary Pat Bohn and Sarah Henery will continue in their current roles for now.

There are many internal processes involved in making any change, and many are budget related.

The role of the Partnership Council as it relates to the change to Division was discussed. The Partnership Council will continue in the form it currently has under legislation whether or not Milwaukee Child Welfare is a Bureau or a Division. The Council continues as a federally designated Citizen Review Panel, as well.

Critical Incident Committee Report, Mallory O'Brien

The Committee met in December. A report listing the committee's recommendations over the last several years was distributed.

Progress of Access and Initial Assessment Functions, Mary Pat Bohn

BMCW continues to evaluate the number of staff needed to adequately respond to incoming calls. The number of callbacks is decreasing.

She noted that case review continues. Dates for reviewing files are set up through February. Current number of cases waiting for case closing is approximately 1000. BMCW continues to hire IA staff. Five new people have just started, and there are currently eight vacancies. A new process for hiring IA specialists was described that includes an exam and writing an essay as a first step in the application process.

BMCW is also evaluating the Access process. A goal of this process is that eleven seats in access are filled at all times. It appears that BMCW is doing a better job of screening in the right calls. Since November, the number of cases assigned from Access has decreased.

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BMCW 635 N. 26 St.
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During November/December, workers have been averaging approximately 10-11 new cases a month. Mary Pat was asked to provide the number of cases each worker currently has. Information will be sent out.

DCF Updates, Fredi Bove

The new federal legislation regarding sex trafficking and strengthening families was reviewed. Director Bove discussed the recommendations of the Legislative Council study committee looking at adoption disruption that includes four bills designed to provide stronger supports to adoptive children and families.

She also noted that the “Keeping Our Promise” Supporting Foster Youth in Their Transition to Adulthood will be held on February 4, 2015.

The Bureau has received a letter from members of the Public Policy Committee of the Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services Coalition regarding their disappointment with the decision to end the Family Works program. A Department response to the letter will be sent and shared with the Partnership Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Zellner